Critical Social Work

Burnout North of 60: Supporting Social Workers in Nunavut, Canada

Critical Social Work 17(2)

Cameron McKenzie

York University

Abstract

This study examined variables impacting job stress, burnout, and turnover rates among social workers north of the 60th parallel, in remote parts of Canada populated by Inuit communities. A literature review identified understaffing, social and geographic isolation, role stress, lack of professional support, and cultural and ethnic disparities as possible sources of burnout. This qualitative study evaluated these factors in relation to Northern social workers. Nine in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone with former Nunavut social workers, some of whom were directors, to probe the issue of burnout and turnover. Several themes emerged that are supported by the literature on burnout of social service workers in remote regions and related to the administration of Northern social work services, including understaffing, lack of supervisory support, dual role stress, and overworked staff. Findings suggest the need for giving more attention and resources to social work staff supporting Inuit clients, specifically increased staffing and culturally sensitive training.

Keywords: social work, aboriginal issues, employment burnout, servicing marginalized communities

Background

The Territory of Nunavut was formed in 1999 as an autonomous region "with distinct status in the Canadian Federation" (White, 2009, p. 284). This allowed Inuit self-government (White, 2009, p. 290) and official recognition as a cultural entity in Canada. Inuit are a distinct group of approximately 55,000 among the three main Aboriginal groups in Canada as recognized by the Constitution Act of 1982: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit. Inuit is translated as "the people" (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2012, para. 36). Inuk "is the singular form of Inuit". Inuuk refers to two people and Inuit is used for "three or more people" (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2012, para. 31).

Introduction

Human service workers, including teachers, social workers, nurses, prison officers, and police officers, are prone to high levels of stress (Johnson et al., 2005; Van Heugten, 2011). A preliminary review of literature concerning Northern social workers revealed that burnout significantly influences employment turnover within Northern communities (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Turnover rates are considered problematic when staff vacancies exceed 20 percent of staff per year (Nissly, Mor Barak, & Levin, 2005). The 2011 Auditor-General of Canada Report to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut noted that an average of 17 of 46 social worker positions remained unfilled on a month-to-month basis, whether full-time or temporary (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [OAGC], 2011).

This paper uses the term "social worker" to encompass community social service workers (CSSW) who perform multiple tasks within the social work field: social workers, child welfare workers, front-line child welfare workers, and child protection workers. Research specifically regarding remote Northern social workers remains in its infancy, however. This preliminary investigation reports on a qualitative study of nine former Northern Canadian social workers and probes their experience of burnout and the possible causes of high turnover rates among them.

Literature Review

Social workers are subject to high levels of stress and stress-related disorders leading to job resignation and burnout due to client hostility, emotional demands, role conflict, the need to hide or suppress personal emotions, and their perception of having little influence in the workplace (Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002; Rugulies et al., 2007; Van Heugten, 2011). Researchers estimate that one-third of social workers experience serious work-related mental or physical stress, with more than half experiencing stress that is higher than they can safely manage (Coffey & Gagin, 2005; Huxley et al., 2005). In remote Northern communities of Canada, social workers face even more challenges than their southern counterparts. Challenges include insufficient resources for programming (e.g., for addiction treatment and youth programs), geographic and social isolation (no roads, fly-in access only), and cultural barriers (Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011).

Typically, human services workers in Northern Canadian communities come from southern urban Canadian communities, have little working knowledge of life in the far North, and lack knowledge of Inuit culture and customs (Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011). As a

McKenzie

result, these workers may be insufficiently prepared to tackle the cultural divide between themselves and their clients. They may also carry Eurocentric biases, making it difficult for them to assimilate traditional Inuit values and customs into their own practices (O'Neill, 2010).

A review of the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)* linked social worker burnout to unreasonable and excessive work hours, case overload, and social isolation (Terriplan Consultants, 2010). These factors contribute to job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified workers (O'Neill, 2010; Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011). Furthermore, stress levels increase exponentially for child protection social workers due to compassion fatigue (Anderson, 2000; Bennett, Plint, & Clifford, 2005; Conrad & Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Van Heugten, 2011). In Nunavut, social workers may be on-call for extended periods of time, leading to exhaustion, and they may feel that they lack programming resources for social service work (Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011).

Role Stress

Role stress is a type of employee stress emerging from boundary-spanning activities (Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Role stress encompasses role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, all of which can lead to or exacerbate burnout and have long-term negative health consequences for social workers (Ben-Zur & Michael, 2008; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Um & Harrison, 1998). It often emerges from the increasing demands made on social workers, including paperwork, casework overloads due to staffing shortages, inadequate supervision, and challenging clientele (Kim & Stoner, 2008). Staffing continues to be a major issue for social workers in Nunavut. Kim and Stoner's (2008) cross-sectional study was one of the few recent works addressing burnout amongst social workers. Their research of 346 American social workers registered in California found that "role stress" positively correlated with burnout (Kim & Stoner, 2008, p. 5), which in turn is a prominent antecedent to absenteeism and employment resignation (Huang, Chang, & Lin, 2003). Further, they found that high job demands and insufficient job resources cumulatively impacted burnout as they contributed to the inability to complete tasks, goal-setting, and obtaining and maintaining job autonomy. These problems impact the quality of services provided and the level of trust clients have in social service systems (Kim & Stoner, 2008). Under these high-stress conditions, many social workers, while physically present at work, may be unable to properly focus on the tasks (Van Heugten, 2011).

Social Work in Northern Settings

Many unique role stress challenges emerge when in Northern settings. Zapf (1993) analyzed the impact of role stress in Northern communities and found that social workers arrived at remote Northern community settings with pre-existing stress from their urban jobs (Zapf, 1993); the added challenges of working in remote communities exponentially increased their stress. Role expectations, based on training in southern urban centres, also conflicted with the perspectives of Northerners (Brocious et al., 2013; Zapf, 1993). Insider versus outsider positions became blurred and problematized the workers' expectations of previously established worker-client roles (Zapf, 1993). This happens because in smaller Northern communities, social workers often experience a blurring of roles and dual relationships (Brocious et al., 2013). Furthermore, these populations respond better to service provisions delivered in an informal, personalized

manner due to the emphasis on familial and friendship bonds (Stuart, 2013). Such concerns are magnified by the volatile nature of client problems, the volume of clients, and sparse employment supports (Gough, Shlonsky, & Duddling, 2009; Stephenson, Rondeau, Michaud, & Fiddler, 2000).

It is ironic that the dual role relationships that impede the social worker-client relationship can become integral to building trust and having successful outcomes in Inuit communities, wherein a longstanding distrust persists from colonialism. Loomba (2005) defines colonialism as "the conquest and control of other people's land and goods... the takeover of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and cultural structures of another territory or nation'' (pp. 8-11) Inuit of Nunavut have experience colonialism differently than First Nation and Métis in the sense that it was domestic colonialism (Kral, 2012). This recognizes that it was colonialism from within (Canadian imposed) (Burke, 2005). Client problems emerged from a history of deinstitutionalization and colonialism, delineating an impoverished, vulnerable clientele base subject to perpetual funding shortfalls and continual restructuring of social services (Gough, Shlonsky, & Dudding, 2009; Schmidt, 2000; Stephenson et al., 2000). According to O'Neill (2010), non-Aboriginal practitioners also felt "guilt by race", meaning feeling guilt or a burden of privilege linked to their non-Aboriginal identity and roots. Culture shock, high workloads, insufficient training and knowledge, and exposure to the emotional trauma of clients were all linked to heightened stress among Northern practitioners (O'Neill, 2010). The workers described physical and emotional exhaustion as well as loss of compassion, which are recognized antecedents to burnout (O'Neill, 2010). Furthermore, these experiences caused social workers to lose faith in themselves, and feel incapable of helping their clients (O'Neill, 2010). Stress increased exponentially for social workers employed in the areas of child protection and mental health due to compassion fatigue (Anderson, 2000; Bennett, Plint, & Clifford, 2005; Conrad & Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Van Heugten, 2011).

Cultural Issues

Inuit culture has different characteristics and traditions than other Aboriginal cultures. Tester and Irniq (2008) traced Inuit history and its knowledge, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqngit* (IQ), in order to understand Inuit culture, traditions, beliefs, and ways of thinking. *Inuit Qaujimajatuqngit* incorporates a cosmological belief system, which focuses on managing biological resources in a seamless fashion, without separating humans from other forms of life (Tester & Irniq, 2008). It operates on Inuit's three guiding principles: (a) *Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq*, respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment; (b) *Ikajuqtigiinniq*, working together for a common cause; and (c) *Aajiiqatigiinniq*, decision-making through discussion and consensus (Nunavut Kavamanga, 2010). Inuit communities incorporate IQ values in every area of life (Schmidt, 2000) and subsist in co-dependent, mutually supportive, psychosocial networks to cope with challenges (Coates, Gray, & Hetherington 2006; Gray, Coates, & Bird, 2010). *Inuit Qaujimajatuqngit* values place the rights of community above those of the individual and involve commitment to political self-governance (Tester & Irniq, 2008).

The forced acculturation of Inuit has made working relations between social workers and Inuit precarious, as social workers are often seen as part of colonialist efforts at assimilation,

McKenzie

including mandatory schooling, residential schools, and the imposition of non-Inuit value systems (e.g., prison systems, Western notions of legal rights, etc.), at the expense of the culture and way of life of Inuit (Government of Nunavut, 2010). According to Merriam-Webster (2012), acculturation is defined as the "cultural modification of an individual, group or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture, a merging of cultures as a result of prolonged contact" and "the process by which a human being acquires the culture of a particular society from infancy" (para. 1-2). Zapf (1993) found that southern-trained social workers' values of personal autonomy and responsibility clashed with Inuit clients' values of collectivity. Other concerns resulted from the volatile nature of client problems, the volume of clients, and sparse employment supports (Gough, Shlonsky, & Duddling, 2009; Stephenson et al., 2000).

Northern-based social worker training programs typically focus on cultural and region-specific knowledge (Zapf, 1993). Schmidt (2000) noted that to minimize stress, it would be useful to give Northern social workers extensive training in Inuit culture and traditional conflict-resolution methods. Social workers could work as collaborative 'non-experts' addressing clients' needs through a social justice, anti-oppressive, and non-discriminatory lens (Schmidt, 2000). Additionally, Brown and Green (2009) suggest increasing the number of Northern social worker placements, and fostering preparatory and transitional collaboration among incoming and outgoing social workers (Brown & Green, 2009; Misener et al., 2008).

Climate and Geography

Climate strongly influences social worker burnout and turnover in Northern Canada. Inclement weather and dangerous travelling conditions can be isolating and contribute to stress (O'Neill, 2010). Many workers have difficulty adapting to the frigid temperatures (O'Neill, 2010) and the short winter days in the North. The coldest community in Nunavut, Grise Fiord, has temperatures that only rise to 5°C in summer and can drop to -50°C. Spring temperatures across the country average between -20°C and -10°C, with winter temperatures ranging between -15°C to -40°C. The midnight sun period commonly extends through spring and summer. For example, Nunavut's capital Iqaluit receives 21 hours of sunlight during this period, versus only 4 hours of sunlight in the shortest day of the year (Nunavut Tourism, 2013).

Many parts of Nunavut can only be reached by sea or air (see Figure 1). The vast distances between communities exacerbate personal and professional isolation (O'Neill, 2010; Schmidt, 2003). O'Neill (2010) found social workers to be effectively trapped in an isolated environment with repeated exposure to the traumatic experiences of their clients.
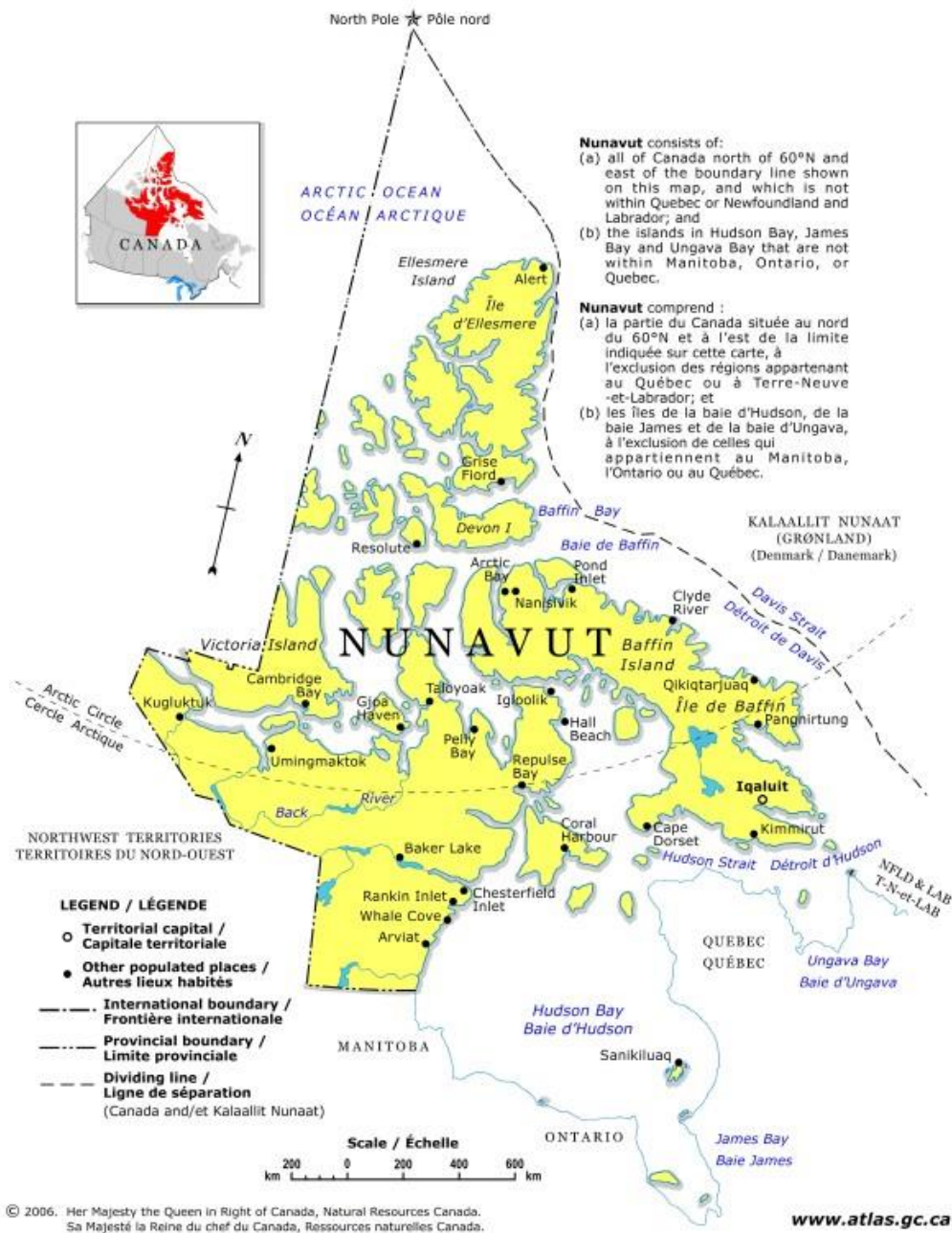
McKenzie

Figure 1.0. Map of Nunavut

Social, Professional, and Community Supports

Along with increased cultural awareness, burnout risk is reduced by the provision of social supports (Houkes, Janssen, De Jonge, & Bakker, 2003; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Karasek and Theorell (1990) and Houkes, Janssen, De Jonge, & Bakker (2003) argued that increased social supports for social workers correlate positively with morale (Houkes et al., 2003; Karasek & Theorell, 1990), and, in turn, reduce stress and turnover rates among Northern social workers (Um & Harrison, 1998). Developing partnerships with individuals and local community groups facilitates better integration into local community life (Um & Harrison 1998;

McKenzie

Schmidt, 2003), and fosters feelings of greater job efficacy (O'Neill, 2010). O'Neill (2010) notes that increased social, professional, and community connections make social workers more vulnerable to the pain and suffering of their clients, expressed as a form of secondary trauma. Schmidt (2000) suggested a new social development model that promotes social and economic development in the community as a way of empowering the population, while remaining sensitive to local traditions, interests, and values (Schmidt, 2000).

Eastburg, Williamson, Gorsuch, and Ridley (1994) determined that supervisory support helps prevent burnout and was an important coping resource for human service workers. Supervisors needed to maintain 'consideration' and 'structure' to determine 'job satisfaction and burnout' (Duxbury, Armstrong, Drew & Henly, 1984). Consideration refers to a style of supervisory relationship with staff that is mutually trusting, and fosters awareness of feelings, respect for opinions, and open communication (Duxbury et al., 1984). Structure is the degree to which the supervisor directs and manages the workplace, including criticisms, planning, and monitoring, to ensure the wellbeing of all employees (Duxbury et al., 1984). The study revealed that supervisors who provide a high degree of structure and low levels of consideration contribute to employee burnout and job dissatisfaction (Duxbury et al., 1984). Open, supportive supervision, including positive feedback training for supervisors (Eastburg et al., 1994) led to lower levels of burnout, better job satisfaction, and more effective coping mechanisms amongst supervisors and employees (Duxbury et al., 1984).

The purpose of this study was to provide an initial investigation into the factors that impact job stress, burnout, and turnover rates among social workers in Nunavut.

Method

Participants

The nine human service workers (three males and six females) who participated were from across Canada. Two were Inuit and the others were non-Aboriginal. Eight of these participants indicated *Community Social Service Worker* as their job title, and one held the title of *Director of Social Services*. Six were from southern provinces, two were from Nunavut, and one was from the Yukon. Six had social work degrees (four had bachelor's degrees and two had master's degrees). Among the other three, two had bachelor's degrees in psychology, and one had a college diploma in human services.

Data Collection

Thirty community social service workers identified, and of these identified services, 23 had up-to-date contact information. A recruitment script approved by a south-western Ontario University Research Ethics Board was sent to the 23 workers. Ten responded, and nine were interviewed. I was unable to set up an interview with the tenth. Individuals who completed the interview were given a $50 VISA gift card.

Interview questions explored the interaction of social and environmental factors as linked to perceptions of stress and burnout, and for many, the ultimate decision to leave the job.

McKenzie

Interviews took place between April and July 2012. Study consent was disseminated electronically to these human service workers, who replied by mail, fax, or email. Oral consent was also sought and recorded at the beginning of interviews. Participant identities were protected by replacing all names in the coded data with participant numbers.

Data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured telephone interviews lasting 30 to 60 minutes, which were then digitally recorded and later transcribed. Every attempt was made to clarify comments when needed to enhance understanding during the interview (Glesne, 2011). This process allowed for the compilation of a universal "composite description" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58) of what was experienced and how it was experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of establishing consistency across several interviews, as each participant is asked a set list of questions, while simultaneously allowing conversational interaction. This permits a greater amount of data to be gathered (Guion, Diehl, McDonald, 2011).

The *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* was used in order to aggregate, sort, and interpret the study's data (Saldaña, 2009). Interviews were coded for common themes or patterns based on the social workers' perceptions and responses. An hermeneutical phenomenological approach (HPA) was used, as an outgrowth of the Interpretive Social Science framework (ISS), which breaks down how people construct meaning around their lived realities (Neuman, 2011), and tries to interpret their experience to determine its impact on individuals and society (Laverty, 2008). HPA recognizes that researchers' biases and assumptions are embedded in the interpretive and interviewing process (Laverty, 2008). In doing qualitative research, reflexivity is an essential tool for the researcher to better understand what is being studied and the process of studying it (Pillow, 2003). The researcher must be aware of their own biases, assumptions, and social location, along with the participants' (Neuman 2011). For these reasons, I took field notes on each interview to gather probing questions and to document my internal thought process for data analysis. Together ISS and HPA allow an intensive analysis of specific phenomena, such as high turnover rates and burnout, with the potential to generate themes with direct applicability to solving these problems (Glesne, 2011). This approach provides an explanation that is comprehensible as a common-sense interpretation of everyday life (Neuman, 2011, p.105). Such an explanation included researcher subjectivities and observation in the final textual analysis, in order to yield results that were valid and credible (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Typically, the observations are made in a natural setting, but the timeframe and resources of this study confined data collection to in-depth phone interviews with participants.

Results

Coding revealed seven broad themes: understaffing, lack of supervisory supports, isolation, feelings of mistrust and lack of respect, cultural challenges and gaps, dual roles, and repercussions of the CFSA.

Understaffing

The most commonly reported contributing factor in leaving a social work job in the North was understaffing. Participants P1, P2, P5, and P8 all experienced understaffing during

their tenure in Iqaluit. The town of 7,000 had only six social work positions in a community that, according to P3, needed 10 due to the social epidemics of alcoholism, poverty, abuse, and unemployment. Iqaluit social workers reported "running to keep up," and constantly "jumping from one 'fire' to the next" (P2). P5 stated, "It was like working in a MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] unit," and recommended increased staff and additional preventative programs to minimize the amount of crisis work. Furthermore, participants who had worked in Iqaluit felt constantly overworked because of job vacancies due to illnesses or vacations. P8 stated, "there were six [social workers in Iqaluit] on paper—at one point, we did have five—but the majority of the time we worked with three. Then if you're working with three, we often worked with two, because people are away or sick."

Temporary replacement workers only contributed to the instability of work conditions and the inefficacy of staff. P4 stated:

> …workers are in two, three, six weeks and then they're gone, and new people come in. There's constant turnover, and there's no time for relationship building and continuity of service. Working in an office where there are only four or five social workers, and, actually, only three social workers at any given time, considering people go on vacation—it's kind of hard to service a town of seven thousand.

P9 echoed these concerns as being "the big issue" since he had to do the job of at least two people during his 5-year term, with a 1-year leave of absence. P8 confirmed that she had never worked in Iqaluit when it was fully staffed.

Understaffing was also a concern in smaller communities, where there was often only one social worker on staff at a given time. Most participants felt that there should be at least two, to match the staffing of nursing and police units. P8 stated that there was a "real lack of sensitivity to the total isolation in some of the communities." P6 echoed this:

> … in every other collateral, profession in this town, they're a team. I mean the RCMP are two. The nurses are two. The school is five. And here you're one, and they all have very different views on how you should do your own job right.

Even experienced social workers, like P9, recognized the issues pertaining to burnout and high turnover rates: "I think the communities that only have one worker are a big, big problem, because they don't seem to keep workers, and I think part of it is because they are alone."

Lack of Supervisory Supports

Eight of nine participants commented on the impact of supervisors and management infrastructure on their job performance. When asked what drove them to leave their positions and contributed to their stress and burnout, they answered "their supervisors" or "lack of supervision". Personal contact was seen as an important aspect of a supervisor's role. As P6 said, "I mean, it did feel tough in a sense to not see someone face-to-face (in Nunavut)."

McKenzie

Many supervisors appeared too busy to help their staff and were hard to get a hold of (P6). Supervisors were also unable to keep promises and offered minimal leadership, because they were involved in case management and micromanagement, seen as a misappropriation of time and skills (P8). Support and guidance for individually challenging cases were paramount to participants. P3 stated that, "the supervisor is never really in the place to discuss, to talk, to discuss a case with you, to help you out, support you."

A number of participants commented that better communication, support, and supervisory guidance were needed locally and regionally. In discussing a stressful event that occurred in the community, P3 noted that there was "little support from the regional office… there is no real communication, I feel." Likewise, P7 remarked that she "…felt the support from [name omitted] was dismal" and, "non-existent". P7 also thought management should offer hands-on help to mitigate the profound isolation and loneliness affecting social workers in remote communities:

> … they really should be doing fly-ins, and going out to these isolated
> communities and spending a few days with some of these new workers. And I
> think that is one of the problems as to why they're not keeping their staff. … It's
> not easy to feel like there's no one you could call and get support….

The same participants voiced a need for more management or supervisor training:

> I had an instance where a child had to get out of the community, but I couldn't get
> a signature to get the kid out. I got no response, no response, and couldn't get it.
> …So imagine if you're a new young worker, or you've never been up North…. I
> got bawled out for trying to communicate directly with their manager; my
> supervisor couldn't, wasn't getting a response either…. I think management needs
> to be trained better.

P3 and P4 also mentioned concerns related to the cultural rift between Inuit family values and rules imposed by the bureaucracy in carrying out the *CFSA*. P3 indicated:

> In [location omitted] I was told, because I have a friend who was working there,
> that at one point recently, they all resigned. That's what I heard. Because you are
> always at the mercy of the bureaucrats on top, who have no real contact with the
> community, and whose mandate is really to make the rules, to make sure the rules
> are respected. And in an Inuit context, dealing with Inuit family, how could it be?

The multiple layers of bureaucracy were also a problem for P4:

> You would have a regional director, and then underneath them there would be a
> regional manager, and then underneath them there would be a supervisor, where
> are you reporting to? … You know, it just seems so cumbersome.

These bureaucratic obstacles would at times lead to conflicts between social workers and their supervisors. P2 noted that, "we didn't really have a formal supervisor for, maybe 6 months, 6 months to almost a year". When asked about available support systems or programs, most

McKenzie

participants disclosed that there was an employee assistance program. However, few accessed the program due to lack of trust and feeling it would not offer prompt support. P8 noted: "I had just heard from people attempting to use it; you have to leave your number, like no one answers the phone — it's a 1-800 number."

Geographic and Social Isolation

Geographic isolation and the Northern climate were also connected to burnout risk. The vast distances between areas, limited means of transportation and separation between communities, particularly where air travel is the only access route, contributed to geographic isolation. Extreme cold, bad weather conditions, the confining effects of storms and the climate overall, and the long hours of winter darkness were also factors. All participants indicated that they worked mostly in communities accessible only by plane, and often in bad weather. P3, P4, P5 and P9 spoke about the cold climate and persistent darkness, which makes people tired and depressed. P9 found it a problem being confined to a community without access to "certain foods, services, and resources". This was echoed by P5 who commented on the isolating effect of the weather: "The winters there are very, very long. You start to get cabin fever by about April…. It causes isolation, for sure." P6 articulated this concern when he said:

> I would have been willing to work there longer. I could have done it for a year, but I knew beyond a year, I couldn't … It was, primarily, the isolation, of not having a team member to work with.

The two subjects who identified themselves as Inuuk did not experience these challenges. P8 was not affected by isolation, claiming she took relatively short temporary postings and felt her years of experience helped protect her from burnout.

The geographic isolation is further compounded by and contributes to the social isolation experienced by social workers. The accessibility and expense of travel, as well as services and goods, is a barrier to living and working in remote Northern communities. For example, the cost of a return trip can vary from $2500 to $6000, there can be postage penalties for online shopping, and food prices and availability are unstable. All participants emphasized the need to establish a network of contacts, friends and family, to provide additional psychological supports. P3 professed:

> The worst situation like that is if you are alone. Many social workers were alone. You are so isolated, and so unable very often to fulfill your own needs. Like needs to see good movies. Need to go for a meal with friends. You need friends. You need a support system. And you need to be able to get out of this place.

Feelings of Mistrust and Lack of Respect

The seven non-Aboriginal social workers commented that Inuit still had a lot of mistrust towards non-Aboriginals, attributing this to the residual effects of colonialism. P5 summarized:

> You're a white person, you're a minority, and you're going in, and you're working with a population that doesn't have a lot of trust for white people. …People look at you, "who is this girl, and what is she able to do for us? And, is she OK? Can we trust her?" Basically you're going in and providing crisis intervention. And that's difficult to do when you don't have the trust of the community. That takes time to build.

P4 said, "I felt people [Inuit] became very, very angry… here you have white people coming in, professionals, and they [Inuit] felt totally done too." P1, who was Inuk, stated that mistrust occurred in the office because the social workers were primarily non-Aboriginal. She "felt that there was a bit of prejudice from workers from the south, non-Aboriginals" and she experienced many cultural challenges dealing with her co-workers. P1 said, "Mistrust amongst clients and colleagues made it hard for these Northern social workers to make connections."

Social workers from the south expressed that they had a hard time forging relationships with clients, due to the temporary nature of their placements. P7 discussed her experience with an Inuk whose first question was "How long are you here for?" She "was embarrassed to say I'm only here for 2 months. And so I felt that lessened my ability to be effective with them." The brevity of time spent in any given community diminished social workers' effectiveness and prevented them from obtaining the trust needed to facilitate individual and community change.

Another common theme noted by seven participants was a lack of respect for social workers. These workers felt that negative perceptions were embedded within the community. This was seen to be a pervasive phenomenon because other human services workers, such as nurses or teachers, had salary incentives, travel grants, staffing support and sabbatical leave. P6 commented, "Look at the financial rewards that a nurse gets… various bonuses every month. For the social workers these don't even exist. I feel that there's a double standard".

Cultural Challenges and Gaps

Southern social workers had little cultural knowledge of Inuit IQ and rarely understood the workings or challenges of applying the *CFSA* in Nunavut. This was most evident amongst younger and newer social workers from the south. P5 stated, "I knew nothing about Nunavut, I knew nothing about Inuit—absolutely nothing." Six respondents commented on the challenges faced by southern social workers in adapting to Inuit culture and values. Social workers were misunderstood by Inuit because southern understanding of child protection and how to apply the *CFSA* conflicted with Inuit perspectives or values. For example, something considered dangerous or neglectful by outsiders is a normal part of Inuit child upbringing. P3 specified:

> If you don't understand if it's normal for an Inuit family to have food on the floor, on cardboard, clean food with a knife, you say, "Oh my god, the children they play with the knife." The children, they go and touch the knife when they are babies, but very quickly they learn that they don't play with the knife. And they just ignore that; they don't even see it. But southern eyes coming to do a child welfare investigation will see it.

McKenzie

Colonial practices were perpetuated when social workers sent Inuit children to southern programs for treatment, failing to take into consideration Inuit traditions and culture. P5 remarked that sending children and youths to southern facilities negatively impacted children and their families socially, financially, and culturally.

Inuuk social workers had a better understanding of Inuit culture and traditions and were able to relate more easily to their clients. P1 observed that her cultural knowledge and sensitivity allowed her to reflect on how "social workers if they could learn more about IQ, if that could be implemented into the work environment, it would lead to a better understanding of Inuit values."

Dual Roles

Dual roles were seen to be in conflict particularly in situations involving the apprehension of children, and in cases of abuse. As a member of the community, P2 commented, "I dreaded the days I thought I might have contact with school friends. In this town, as soon as you become a social worker everyone knows about it, and you're almost instantly hated by just about everybody in town." P1 commented that clients talked about their problems in social settings, creating an uncomfortable atmosphere or situation for social workers. This was even more stressful for social workers that were from the community.

Repercussions of the Child and Family Services Act

Although the initial set of interview questions did not ask participants about the impact of the *CFSA*, questions about it were incorporated into the interviews after some of the participants (P1, P2, and P3) mentioned that administering the *CFSA* caused them stress. P3 observed the *CFSA* was taken from the Northwest Territories (NWT) "and plugged into Nunavut," which meant that "burnout came mainly from having to constantly fight against the standard, the southern standard, and the place where you are living."

High stress is a recognized element of the social work profession, particularly for front-line social workers. All interview respondents felt varying degrees of stress in their job and most felt burnout or felt prone to developing burnout if they stayed long term in the North, which contributed to their decision to leave. P9 felt that being overworked due to understaffing was the main cause of what he claimed was "classic burnout," being "extremely low energy, irritable, always tired." For eight of nine participants, the workload was totally unmanageable and led to exhaustion. P5 noted being tempted to drink as a coping mechanism, but reasoned: "If I started using alcohol to feel better and to go to sleep, I'm going to become a full-blown alcoholic."

Discussion

Analysis revealed seven key themes leading to burnout and stress, including understaffing, lack of supervisory supports, geographic and social isolation, feelings of mistrust and lack of respect between social workers and their clients, cultural challenges and gaps, dual roles, and the repercussions of the *CFSA*. These results agree with the six environmental sources of burnout identified by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001): work overload, lack of autonomy due to rigid regulations and tight monitoring, insufficient rewards, unfairness and lack of respect

McKenzie

in the workplace, and breakdown among community members and colleagues due to value clashes or conflicts with respect to work goals and priorities. Corey and Corey (2011) identified similar factors in burnout among the helping professions, including "professionally taxing work without much opportunity for supervision," "giving a great deal personally and not getting back much in the way of appreciation" and "working with a difficult population" (p. 318). These findings are consistent with the experiences reported by social workers in the current study.

There is a longstanding problem recruiting and retaining social workers in Northern territories (Bodor, 2009). Participants' responses were congruent with Minogue's (2005) findings that "[s]ocial workers in Nunavut are handling too many cases without enough money or resources" (para. 1). She added that, "Turnover is high for social workers, who often burn out on the job" (para. 6). A recent government paper, The Nunavut Social Services Review (Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011), noted that social and geographic isolation, stress, and salary and benefit issues all contribute to understaffing. Understaffing is synonymous with work overload and was given as a major cause of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). This study's findings are consistent with the Report of the Auditor General (2011) and those of Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak (2011). Yet although understaffing has been repeatedly documented over the last twenty years, it remains unaddressed.

Proper supervision is essential to success, health, and wellbeing among social workers in the North. Lack of supervisory supports was identified as a problem in the Nunavut Social Services Review report (Phaneuf, Dudding & Arreak, 2011) and by Bodor (2009) and has been highlighted by this study's participants. This study's findings also corroborate Schmidt (2000) and O'Neill (2010), who noted the relationship between supervisory support and the prevention of burnout in Northern social workers.

Corey and Corey (2011) and Maslach and Leiter (1997) noted that stressful work without adequate supervision significantly contributes to burnout because of the lack of collegial networking provided by supervisors. Many study participants felt that rules and regulations were a priority over clients' wellbeing. Similarly, Maslach and Leiter (1997) found that employees felt they had no control over their work when forced to adhere inflexibly to the *CFSA*. In addition, many participants were left with a sense of powerlessness, particularly in situations where they thought managers made poor decisions or did not fulfill their responsibilities.

Geographic and social isolation also contribute to stress, burnout, and staff turnover (Misener et al., 2008; O'Neill, 2004; Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011; Schmidt, 2000). Several study participants cited geographic and social isolation as a key stressor contributing to burnout and to the decision to leave work. Social isolation included lack of contact and support from colleagues, separation from family and friends, and being in an unfamiliar culture or place, particularly when the social worker was non-Aboriginal or from the south. This loss of communal interaction with colleagues, due to social and geographic isolation, adds to the risk of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). These points were reiterated in the Canadian literature relating to child welfare workers across Canada. Anderson and Gobeil (2003) indicated that "the feeling of belonging to a community and having a solid peer support network at work reduces burnout at management and front line levels" (p. 4). Participants in the current study had similar responses, complaining of isolation and being undervalued, which is congruent with previous

McKenzie

studies (Alwon & Reitz, 2000; Soderfeldt, Soderfeldt, & Warg, 1995). Isolation, in turn, facilitates burnout and ultimately job resignation (Drake & Yadama, 1996; Huang, Chuang, & Lin, 2003; Kim & Stoner, 2008).

Dual roles mean that social workers cannot experience the anonymity of a metropolitan environment (Schmidt, 2000). As Schmidt (2000) noted: "It's like living in a 'fish bowl' always under scrutiny by neighbours and your community, many of whom may also be clients" (p. 344). Study participants saw role stress as a burnout factor, particularly in their child protection role. Coincident with other research on role stress (Ben-Zur & Michael, 2008; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Um & Harrison, 1998), social workers found themselves caught between their job responsibilities, and the need to make connections and derive support from the community they worked and lived in, causing significant emotional and physical stress.

Non-Inuit and Inuuk social workers in the study experienced relationships with their clients in different ways. On one hand, the Inuuk social workers felt less stigma working in their own community, but when interactions were adversarial (e.g., in their child protection roles) they felt more vulnerable to community stigma. Non-Inuit workers tended to feel like mistrusted outsiders. These circumstances led to an erosion of respect for the worker, generated mistrust between social workers and clients, and widened cultural challenges and gaps. Inuit clients looked upon southern social workers through the eyes of the colonized, in a context of historical policies of assimilation, bureaucratic governance, and the imposition of non-Inuit values on Inuit communities (Rae, 2011). Study participants stated that it was also difficult to develop trusting relationships when social workers had only brief stints in a given community.

The relationship was further hindered when social workers imposed a southern mentality on Inuit clients' problems (Bodor, 2009; Tester & Irniq, 2008). The adversarial and conflicted roles these social workers held in administering the *CFSA* was reflected in the literature and in participant interviews. Participants recognized the shortcomings of the *CFSA* and the need for it to be amended (Rae, 2011). Phaneuf, Dudding and Arreak (2011) noted that many Inuit viewed the *CFSA* more as a "weapon" than a "tool" (p. 41), and feel that the *CFSA* ought to be more collaborative among communities, family members and social services.

This constellation of themes is a recipe for burnout and high turnover rates among social workers in Nunavut. Northern social workers experience heightened stress levels compared with social workers in other jurisdictions (Van Heugten, 2011). All of the participants in this study encountered these struggles and obstacles as they tried to balance social, professional, and community interactions. These findings have helped to develop a list of recommendations intended to alleviate social worker burnout and improve retention in Nunavut.

Recommendations

The findings of this study indicate that there are certain concerns that should be examined in order to increase, or even sustain, the retention rate of social workers in Northern communities. Therefore, these findings have important implications for practice. Specifically, in an effort to address some of these concerns, there are opportunities for two-way training, respect and support of traditional approaches to problem-solving, better use of technology, legislative

changes, and an increased emphasis on fiscal and human resources must be examined. Furthermore, it is important to recognize both the personal and professional rationale behind social workers' decision to stay.

Training and Education

Training and education should include professional training of new and existing social workers, with an emphasis on recruiting Northerners to work in the North, and on increasing community education about social work.

A non-adversarial approach to interactions will reduce tensions between social workers and Inuit clients. New and existing social workers should be trained (Phaneuf, Dudding, & Arreak, 2011) on topics such as the Inuit way of making decisions through consensus (Nunavut Kavamanga, 2010). Social workers must recognize that patience and time are needed to build gradual consensus and allow for change to take place. Attention to these differences will allow them to build relationships with clients and bridge cultural gaps. This training should be mandatory for southern-trained social workers interested in working in the North.

Training local Inuit as social workers to provide basic services within communities is also important for creating culturally appropriate social work services. This is similar to the 'barefoot doctors' approach in Central and South America, in which local civilians receive basic medical training, primarily focused on health education and preventative medicine (Roemer, 1986; Smith, 1974). Conversely, educating the Northern community about social work mores, goals and professional rationale might help decrease misunderstandings and enhance trust.

Respect Traditional Approaches

The most important way to improve the social worker-client relationship is to develop partnerships with individuals and groups in the community (Schmidt, 2003; Um & Harrison, 1998). This will help to ameliorate the power imbalances and challenges faced by incoming social workers, and shift the role of the social worker away from that of the colonial agent to one of a collaborator for effective social change (Schmidt, 2003; Um & Harrison, 1998). It will also remove the social worker from a hierarchical position of imposing or forcing their Western values onto Aboriginals (Schmidt, 2003; Um & Harrison, 1998) so as to foster engagement by, and within, the community to reduce problems of child and family abuse, through workshops and other communal activities, and the involvement of elders.

Better Use of Technology

Climate and geography which contribute to the isolation of social workers in the North, are unavoidable. However, increased and effective use telephone or video conferencing could improve communication and lessen the effects of isolation.

Legislative Changes

The *CFSA* must be amended to better reflect Inuit culture, values and traditional ways of

handling family and community conflict. Additionally, social workers can be trained how to handle the discrepancies of the legislation and their practice under the *CFSA*.

More Resources

Governments must provide adequate staffing and funding to alleviate work overload and isolation by increasing the number of social worker posts to a minimum of two workers in small communities, and ten in Iqaluit. Funders and the social work profession should work together to establish fair compensation, benefits and equivalency with other professionals in Nunavut. Necessary administrative changes include flexibility in job structuring, like job sharing, and giving social workers a needed break from isolation and stress. Maintaining continuity of care can be achieved by utilizing the same pair or pool of workers for each job posting.

Conclusion

The findings from this study validate that burnout is a serious concern among social workers in Canadian Northern communities. Nunavut cannot fill all of its social work positions and must rely on temporary workers and replacements from the south. Southern social workers are not well adapted to life in the North due to cultural gaps, social and geographic isolation, clients' mistrust (as a legacy of colonialism), and the adversarial challenges of administering the *CFSA*. These are inter-related elements that contribute to social worker burnout in Nunavut.

In order to increase, or even sustain, the retention rate of social workers in Northern communities and reduce the burnout seen, it is important to examine the recommendations outlined in this study. Social workers in Northern regions of Canada face many work-related challenges, affecting their performance, their ability to meet Inuit clients' needs, and their own well-being. Understaffing, remote and cold climates, cultural disparities and lack of awareness, poor employment support, and blurred lines between personal and professional lives leave social work professionals highly stressed. Burnout is common, and if they leave, their absence places clients in even greater need of support, and makes it more difficult for new and remaining workers to pick up the slack. Thus, it is essential that there is a greater attention to training and education; an emphasis on the importance of respecting traditional approaches; an availability of relevant resources and technology; and legislative change that reflect the values and needs of Inuit communities. The themes discussed in this study create a thorough picture illuminating the challenges encountered addressing cross-cultural relationships North of 60.

References

Alwon, F., & Reitz, A. (2000). *The workforce crisis in child welfare: An issue brief.* Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press.

Anderson, D. G. (2000). Coping strategies and burnout among veteran child protection workers. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *24*(6), 839-848.

Anderson, M., & Gobeil, S. (2003). *Recruitment and retention in child welfare services: A survey of the child welfare league of Canada member agencies*. Ottawa, ON: Child Welfare League of Canada.

Ajjawi, R., & Higgs, J. (2007). Using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate how experienced practitioners learn to communicate clinical reasoning. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(4), 612–638.

Ben-Zur, H., & Michael, K (2007). Burnout, social support, and coping at work among social workers, psychologists, and nurses. *Social Work in Healthcare, 45*(4), 63-82.

Bennett, S., Plint, A., & Clifford, T. J. (2005). Burnout, psychological morbidity, job satisfaction, and stress: A survey of Canadian hospital based child protection professionals. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, *90*(11), 1112-1116.

Bodor, R. (2009). The future for social work and mental health in rural and Northern Canada. *Rural Society*, *19*(4), 289-292.

Brocious, H., Eisenberg, J., York, J., Shepard, H., Clayton, S., & Van Sickle, B. (2013). The strengths of rural social workers: Perspectives on managing dual relationships in small Alaskan communities. *Journal of Family Social Work*, *16*(1), 4-19.

Brown, G., & Green, R. (2009). Ensuring the future of rural social work in Australia. *Rural Society*, *19*(4), 293-295.

Burke, P. (2005). *History and Social Theory* (2 ed.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Coates, J., Gray, M., & Hetherington, T. (2006). An "ecospiritual" perspective: Finally, a place for indigenous approaches. *British Journal of Social Work*, *36*(3), 381-399.

Coffey, M., & Gagin, R. (2005). Can skill-development training alleviate burnout in hospital social worker? *Social Work in Health Care, 34*(5), 735-746.

Conrad, D., & Kellar-Guenther, Y. (2006). Compassion fatigue, burnout, and compassion satisfaction among Colorado child protection workers. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *30*(10), 1071-1080.

Corey, M., & Corey, G. (2011). *Becoming a helper*. Belmont, CA: Brooks Cole

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Five qualitative approaches to inquiry. Qualitative inquiry research design: choosing among five approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, Inc.

Duxbury, M. L., Armstrong, G. D., Drew, D. J., & Henly, S. J. (1984). Head nurse leadership style with staff nurse burnout and job satisfaction in neonatal intensive care units. *Nursing Research, 33*, 97-101.

Drake, B., &Yadama, G. (1996). A structural equation model of burnout and job exit among child protection services workers. *Social Work Research, 20*(3), 179-187.

Eastburg, M., Williamson, M, Gorsuch, R., & Ridley, C. (1994). Social support, personality, and burnout in nurses. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24*(12), 1233-1250.

Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction.* Boston. MA: Pearson.

Gough, P., Shlonsky, A., & Duddling, P. (2009). An overview of the child welfare system in Canada. *International Journal of Child Health and Human Development*, *2*, 357-372.

Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Embrace Life Council, and the Royal
      Canadian mounted Police. (2010). *Nunavut suicide prevention strategy.* Retrieved from
      www.tunngavik.com/wp- content/uploads/2010/11/2010-10-26-nunavut-suicide-
      prevention-strategy-english.pdf

Gray, M., Coates, J., & Bird, M. Y. (2010). *Indigenous social work around the world: Towards
      culturally relevant education and practice*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing
      Company.

Guion, L. A., Diehl, D. C., McDonald, D. (2011). *Conducting an in-depth interview*. Florida:
      Department of Family, Youth and Community Services, Florida Cooperative Extension
      Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Retrieved
      from http://edistt.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FY/FY39300.pdf

Huang, I. C., Chuang, C. H., & Lin, H. C. (2003). The role of burnout in the relationship between
      perceptions of organizational politics and turnover intentions. *Public Personnel
      Management, 32*(4), 519-531.

Houkes, I., Janssen, P. P. M., De Jonge, J., & Bakker, A.B. (2003). Specific determinants of
      intrinsic work motivation, emotional exhaustion and turnover intention: A multi-sample
      longitudinal study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *76,* 427-
      450.

Huxley, P., Evans, S., Gately, C., Webber, M., Mears, A., Pajak, S., Kendall, T., Medina, J., &
      Katona, C. (2005). Stress and pressure in mental health social work: The worker speaks.
      *British Journal of Social Work, (35)*7, 1063-1079.

Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S., Donald, I., Taylor, P., & Millet, C. (2005). The
      experience of work-related stress across occupations. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*,
      20(2), 178-187.

Karasek, R., & Theorell, T. (1990). *Healthy work.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Kim, H., & Stoner, M. (2008). Burnout and turnover intention among social workers: Effects of
      role stress, job autonomy and social support. *Administration in Social Work, 32*(3), 5-25.

Kral, M. J. (2012). Postcolonial suicide among Inuit in Arctic Canada. *Culture, Medicine and
      Psychiatry*, *36*(2), 306–325.

Laverty, S. M. (2008). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of
      historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative
      Methods, 2*(3), pp. 21–35.

Lloyd, C., King, R., & Chenoweth, L. (2002). Social work, stress and burnout: A review. *Journal
      of Mental Health, 11*(3), 255-265.

Loomba, A. (2005). *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (2 ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1986). *The Maslach Burnout Inventory* (2nd ed). Palo Alto, CA:
      Consulting Psychologists Press.

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (1997). *The truth about burnout: How organizations cause
      personal stress and what to do about it*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W.B., & Leiter, M.P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of
      Psychology*, *52*, 397-422.

Minogue, S. (2005, December, 23). Too many kids, not enough social worker. *Nunatsiaq News.*
      Retrieved from
      http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/51223/news/nunavut/51223_02.html

Merriam-Webster (2016). Definition of Acculturation. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acculturation

Misener, R. M., Macleod, M. L., Banks, K., Morton, A. M., Vogt, C., & Bentham, D. (2008). "There's rural, and then there's rural": Advice from nurses providing primary healthcare in Northern remote communities. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Leadership, 21*(3), 54-63.

Mor Barak, M.E., Nissly, J.A., & Levin, A. (2001). Antecedents to retention and turnover among child welfare, social work, and other human service employees: What can we learn from past research? A review and meta-analysis. *Social Service Review, 75*(4), 625-662.

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

National Aboriginal Health Organization (2012). *Terminology*. Retrieved from http://www.naho.ca/publications/topics/terminology/

Natural Resources Canada (2012). *Nunavut*. Retrieved from http://ftp2.ctis.nrcan.gc.ca/pub/geott/atlas_tif/atlas6/Reference/Bilingual/nunavut.pdf

Neuman, W.L. (2011). *Social research methods:* Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Boston. MA: Pearson.

Nissly, J.A., Mor Barak, M.E., & Levin, A. (2005). Stress, social support, and workers' intentions to leave their jobs in public child welfare. *Administration in Social Work, 29*(1), 79-100.

Nunavut Kavamanga. (2010). Kavamaliqiyikkut. *Government of Nunavut*. Retrieved from http://www.eia.gov.nu.ca/in/About.aspx

Nunavut Tourism. (2013). *Weather & Climate.* Retrieved from http://www.nunavuttourism.com/about-nunavut/weather-climate

Office of the Auditor General of Canada. (2011). *Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut: Children, Youth and Family Programs and Services in Nunavut.* Ottawa, ON: Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

O'Neill, L. K. (2010). Northern helping practitioners and the phenomenon of secondary trauma. *Canadian Journal of Counseling and Psychotherapy, 44*(2), 130-149.

Phaneuf, G., Dudding, P., & Arreak, J. (2011). *Nunavut social service review: Final report 2011*. Ottawa, ON: Child Welfare League of Canada.

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *16*(2), pp. 175–196.

Rae, L. (2011). *Inuit child welfare and family support: Policies, programs and strategies*. Ottawa, ON: National Aboriginal Health Organization.

Rugulies, R., Christensen, K. B., Borritz, M., Villadsen, E., Bültmann, U., & Kristensen, T. S. (2007). The contribution of the psychosocial work environment to sickness absence in human service workers: Results of a 3-year follow-up study. *Work & Stress*, *21*(4), 293-311.

Roemer, M. (1986). Priority for primary health care: its development and problems. *Health Policy Plan, 1*(1), 58-66.

Saldaña, J. (2009). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Schmidt, G. (2000). Remote, Northern communities. *International Social Work, 43*(3), 337-349.

McKenzie

Schmidt, G. (2003). *How long are you staying? Retention of social workers in Northern child welfare practice*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Memorial University of Newfoundland, Newfoundland, Canada.

Smith, A.J. (1974). Barefoot Doctors and the Medical Pyramid. *British Medical Journal, 2*(5916) 429-423.

Soderfeldt, M., Soderfeld, B., & Warg, L.E. (1995). Burnout and social work. *Social Work, 40*(5), 638-646.

Stamper, C., & Johlke, M. (2003). The impact of perceived organizational support on the relationship between boundary spanner role stress and work outcomes. *Journal of Management, 29*(4), 569-588.

Stephenson, M., Rondeau, G., Michaud, J.C., & Fidler, S. (2000). *In critical demand: Social work in Canada, Volume 1 (Final report prepared for the social work sector study steering committee)*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work-Association.

Stuart, P. H. (2013). Conceptual and historical foundations of rural social welfare. In T. L. Scales, C. L. Streeter, & H. S. Cooper (Eds.), *Rural Social Work: Building and Sustaining Community Capacity: Building and Sustaining Community Capacity* (2nd ed., pp.1-4). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Tester, F. J., & Irniq, P. (2008). Inuit qaujimajatuqangit: Social history, politics and the practice of resistance. *Arctic, 61*(1), pp. 48-61.

Terriplan Consultants (2010). *Review of the Child and Family Services Act*. Prepared for the Standing Committee on Social Programs of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. Retrieved from http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/10-10-18TerriplanFINALSummaryReportMay2010.pdf

Um, M. Y., & Harrison, D. F. (1998). Role stressors, burnout, mediators, and job satisfaction: A stress-strain-outcome model and an empirical test. *Social Work Research, 22*(2), 100-115.

White, G. (2009). Nunavut and the Inuvialuit settlement region: Differing models of northern governance. In F. Abele, T. Courchene, L. Seidle, & F. St-Hilaire (Eds.), *Northern Exposure People, Powers and Prospects in Canada's North.* (pp. 283-316). Montreal, QC The Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Van Heugten, K. (2011). *Social work under pressure: How to overcome stress, fatigue and burnout in the workplace*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Zapf, M. K. (1993). Remote practice and culture shock: Social workers moving to isolated Northern regions. *Social Work, 38*(6), 694-704.